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ROASTING THE YOUNG AND TENDER BIRD

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, October 12, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

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One day last week Frank George of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics stood on this spot and told us that more poultry would go to market this fall and winter than a year ago. Also, that in the country as a whole consumer incomes would be larger than a year ago.

So, generally speaking --- more money in the family pocketbook, and more dressed poultry in the markets.

WALLACE KADDERLY:

Now for the cooking...the roasting...or whatever it is the cook does to fat, tender, young birds in the fall of the year. For that we'll call on Ruth Van Deman ..Where's she gone?...She was here a moment ago...Paging Ruth Van Deman.

RUTH VAN DEMAN: (From across the room--fading in)

I'm right here, Wallace...bird in hand...We were just comparing notes on the merits of roast chicken, roast duck, roast guinea.

KADDERLY:

Hope you put me down for roast chicken.

VAN DEMAN:

Light or dark meat?

KADDERLY:

"A little of both an' thank you kindly."

VAN DEMAN:

And some of the stuffing?

KADDERLY: (Hesitatingly)

Just a very little, thank you.

VAN DEMAN:

You seem a little lukewarm about the stuffing.

KADDERLY:

There's only one kind of stuffing I like. That's my trouble. I want stuffing to be light and crumbly...seasoned with garden herbs. .not too much seasoning though. The kind of stuffing that gravy sinks into, the way butter disappears on hot corn bread.

VAN DEMAN:

How do you know that isn't the kind of stuffing I'm thinking about too? I was just about to put an imaginary spoonful of nice, crumbly, savory stuffing on your imaginary plate.

(over)

KADDERLY:

Alongside the imaginary slice of white meat....

VAN DEMAN:

And this juicy second joint.

KADDERLY:

Purely imaginary too.

VAN DEMAN:

You know, Wallace, I picture that second joint as so tender it practically fell off the chicken when the carving knife touched it. And the skin is all brown and crispy.

KADDERLY:

Ruth, I'll have to serve you with an order to "cease and desist." You're making me very, very hungry. And that's not imagination.

VAN DEMAN:

Here's the Poultry Cooking leaflet with the recipe for savory stuffing. That doesn't take any imagination at all.

KADDERLY:

No, but if I'm reading right it must take some arithmetic...that is if this recipe is used for stuffing a chicken. This says quantities for a 10-to 12-pound turkey.

VAN DEMAN:

Oh, yes, I forgot. The rice and apricot stuffing there fits a smaller bird.. that one (pointing)

KADDERLY:

A five-pound duck or chicken. I see.

VAN DEMAN:

That one for the turkey...that savory stuffing, with bread crumbs, and celery and so on...that can be halved without any trouble. Some recipes can't be divided very well, but that one can.

We didn't have space in this little leaflet...only 8 pages to cover all the main ways of cooking all kinds of birds...we didn't have the space to give more than two pattern recipes for stuffings.

That one with the rice and the apricots is particularly good with duck. Duck is so rich, the fruit in this stuffing is a good contrast to the fat in the bird.

And with chicken or guinea, the not-so-fat young birds, the richer stuffings go better. That's the place to use nuts in the stuffing or mushrooms browned in butter.

KADDERLY:

Well, no matter what the stuffing is, don't you roast all those young birds pretty much the same way?

VAN DEMAN:

Very much, yes. We find that the open pan and the moderate oven gets the best results on any kind of roast young poultry. An oven of 350 degrees from start to finish for young roasting chicken, or duck, or guinea lets the bird cook gradually to that beautiful golden brown finish.

And when you have a shallow pan and no cover, and put the bird on a rack to keep it from sticking to the bottom and let the hot air circulate all around it, it cooks evenly. And the juice stays in.

KADDERLY:

The open pan and the moderate oven keep the juice in roast chicken, you say...

VAN DEMAN:

Young roast chicken, or any other plump young bird...Yes, I do say it. If necessary I could call the birds roasted that way down in our laboratories to bear witness

KADDERLY:

I'm sure it would be very pleasant to have a whole procession of roast chickens and birds of various kinds come in here to testify. I'm afraid they wouldn't get out whole. But as a matter of fact I've sampled some of these birds down in your experimental kitchens.

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly. You've tasted the proof. You know.

KADDERLY:

Yes. I do know how perfectly cooked they are...tender and juicy, and done all the way through without being dry or overdone on the outside.

VAN DEMAN:

Of course they're turned and basted every half hour or so with melted butter and drippings from the bottom of the pan.

KADDERLY:

Yes, I understand, that "basting", as you call it, and turning...they're part of the technique. But this open pan and moderate oven, that idea still seems a bit revolutionary, doesn't it?

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe so. But it works. It's scientifically sound. The minute you cook any kind of meat under cover, steam begins to collect, and as that steam condenses and runs down over the meat, or chicken, or whatever it is, that moisture carries some of the juice of the meat with it. When you cook meat covered with water to make broth, you get the same thing.

KADDERLY:

...In an extreme form.

VAN DEMAN:

It takes the extremes sometimes to show how the rule works.

VAN DEMAN: (Continued)

There's another point about placing the bird on the rack in the open pan, that helps toward even cooking. After the bird's all stuffed, and trussed, and ready for the oven, put it breast on the rack.

KADDERLY:

Breast down, back up....

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, that gives the thighs, the thickest part of the bird, the most exposure to the heat. The breast meat isn't so likely to be overcooked if it's kept down most of the time.

That's part of the fine art and science of roasting a bird so the skin across the breast won't crack and the meat draw away from the breastbone.

KADDERLY:

Don't you have to be kinda careful with your fork when you turn a roast chicken over in the pan?

VAN DEMAN:

We don't use a fork, Wallace. The prongs of the fork might break the skin and let good juice run out. We take two clean soft cloths folded up and just pick up the chicken, fore and aft, and flip it over.

KADDERLY:

And you don't burn your fingers?

VAN DEMAN:

No, the cloths are thick enough to prevent that.

Just one other thing I'd like to call special attention to in that Poultry Cooking folder, under your elbow.

KADDERLY:

I was just weighting it down, for ready reference.

VAN DEMAN:

Let's refer to page 5, then.

KADDERLY:

Page 5.

VAN DEMAN:

You'll find a timetable for roasting all the different kinds of young birds.

KADDERLY:

This one here?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, in the center of the page. That gives the story for chicken, duck, goose, guinea, turkey.

KADDERLY:

Um-hum (reading). Weight of bird, pounds; oven temperature, degrees Fahrenheit. Time, hours.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, it's all down there in blue and white.

KADDERLY:

That's right...this is the blue and white folder on Poultry Cooking...the one that made its bow at the World's Poultry Congress last summer in Cleveland.

VAN DEMAN:

It's first bow. We hope it will be taking curtain calls right along, for whatever kind of poultry is in season.

KADDERLY:

And this being the season for roasting chickens, and ducks, and turkeys, and guinea keets, we'll make that a definite offer to our listeners?

VAN DEMAN:

By all means.

KADDERLY:

Well, Farm and Home friends, if any of you want this eight-page folder of recipes and directions for cooking poultry, just drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, here in Washington. Write on that card the two words Poultry Cooking, and the leaflet will come to you just as soon as the mail room in the Bureau of Home Economics can address the envelopes and get them routed along to the Government Printing Office where the leaflets are stored. All that takes a little time, but I know the mail room in the Bureau of Home Economics does a fine job of handling your requests as fast as they can.

VAN DEMAN:

And they see that Mr. Kadderly and I get all your comments too. I'm sorry we can't reply to every one. But we certainly do appreciate every thing you say about our part in the Farm and Home Hour and every suggestion you make.

KADDERLY:

I should say we do.

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